

Washington Homes — North Rainier Multi-Unit Housing Points of Demonstration

Project Location

- Southwest Corner of 31st Avenue South and S. Andover Street
- North Rainier Neighborhood
- Lot Size: 36,940 SF (246' x 150') Currently Vacant

Project Description

- New Construction of 13 Units:
- Eight three-bedroom units @ 1800 SF
- Five two-bedroom units @ 1500 SF
- Each Unit Suitable for a Household of 4
- Target Ratio of Own/Rent: 8:5
- One Unit will be ADA Accessible
- Children-Friendly Community

Intention to Build

Owner/Developer intends to construct the project as soon as possible. Other builders may be invited to participate under development covenants; with owner developing common areas and infrastructure

Affordability

Features which contribute to this project's affordability:

- Proposed Density is higher than currently allowed
- Zero-lot lines (carefully used) allow substantial material savings
- Layout of units based on cut/fill strategy (less excavation)
- ADU alternative in most units
- Layout conserves on-street parking—reducing garage expenses

Housing Income Levels Targeted:

- Eight units will target 4-person households at 115% Median
- Five Units will target 3-person households at 115% Median

Consistency with Neighborhood Plan

The project was reviewed and approved by the North Rainier Planning Team Steering Committee on August 11, 1998. The project complies with recommendations in the neighborhood plan to allow cluster housing in single family zones within the urban village boundary.

Code Challenge

Minimum Lot Size

Code Requirement: Current SF zoning requires 5000 sf. Neighborhood Plan recommends RSL zoning with 2500 sf minimum lot size.

Proposed Departure: Proposal complies with RSL limits for overall density (e.g. including common spaces), but individual lots are 1800 sf—less than the required 2500 sf.

Rationale: By clustering units, a common area with open space is created, thereby offering amenities to the neighborhood and encouraging community interaction.

Side Setbacks/Building Separations

Code Requirement: Average 5' sideyard required under RSL; 6' separation between buildings is required under RSL/C.

Proposed Departure: There are several. Typical sideyard is 3' (for 6' separation). Sideyard between attached units is either 0' or 5' depending on location.

Rationale: Flexibility in sideyards is a major factor in creating affordability. By carefully utilizing a zero-lot line scheme, substantial savings in material and effective increases in density can be achieved without diminishing privacy, light and air, or design quality. An additional benefit of attached units (duplexing) results from the grouping of driveways. A required separation would reduce on-street parking along 31st Avenue from nine spaces to four.

Front Setbacks

Code Requirement: 20' is required under current zoning; 10' under Neighborhood Plan.

Proposed Departure: 10' front setback is proposed. Distance from sidewalk would be 15'.

Rationale: Studies show that a 14' separation from sidewalk to front porch is optimal for neighborly interaction.

Height Limit

Code Requirement: Max 25' to plate and 30' to ridge (at >3:12) under RSL

Proposed Departure: Proposed scheme exceeds height limit by 2' at ridge for 9 of the 13 units.

Rationale: Scale is adequately addressed by lowering the roof plate and providing steep roof pitches.

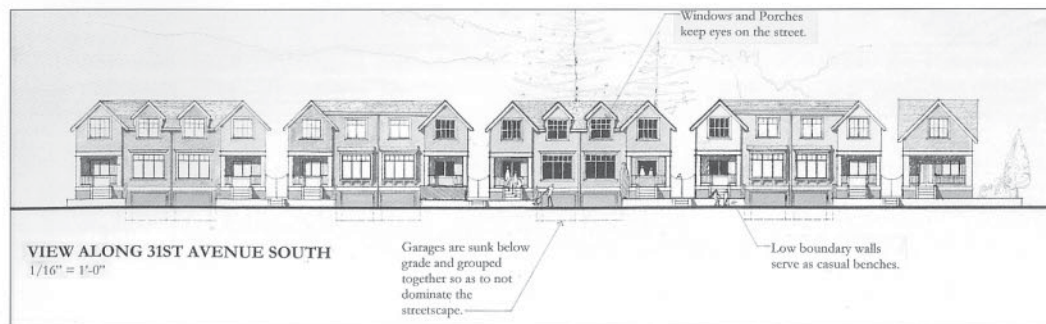
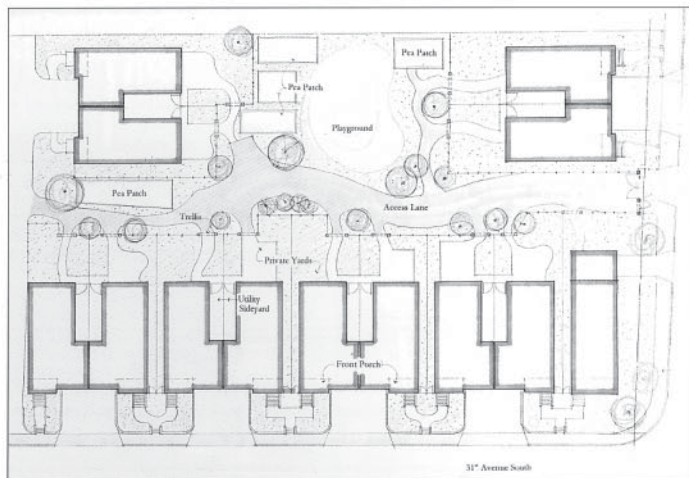
Driveway Slope

Code Requirement: Max. 20% allowed with 10% in first and last 10'.

Proposed Departure: Overall slope of 20% is proposed; garage slab is 3' below sidewalk level.

Rationale: The current code requirement assures that no garage is >12" below or above the sidewalk with standard 20' frontyard.

Result: suburban streetscape! This departure draws upon the traditional strategy of sinking the garage below grade to preserve the streetscape.



Frontyard Parking

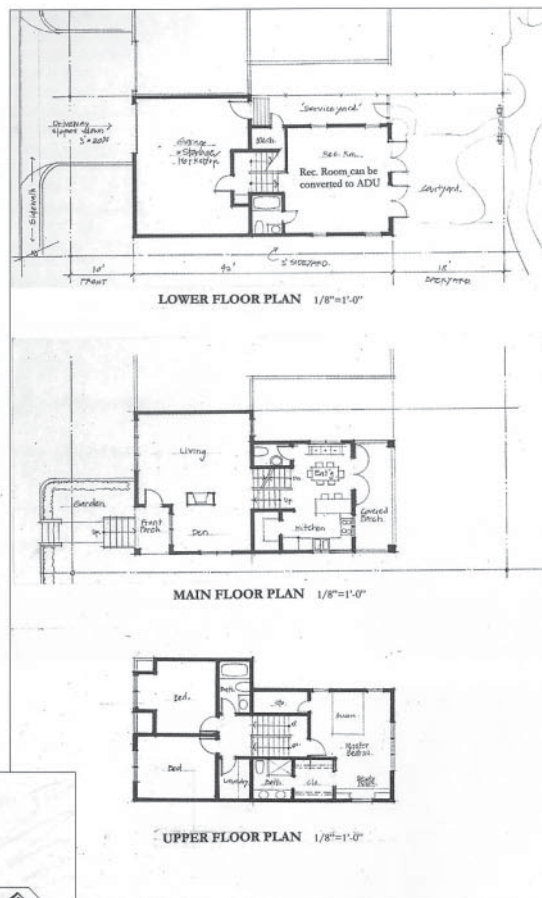
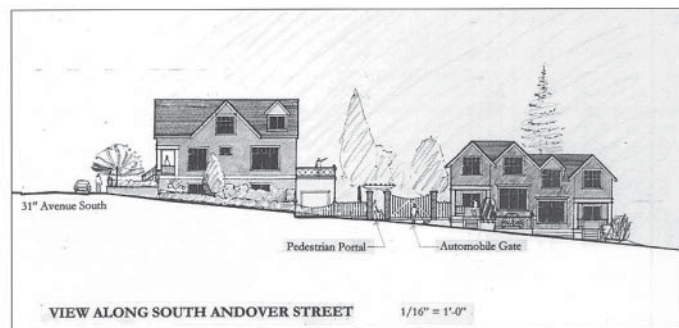
Code Requirement: Not allowed in SF zones.

Proposed Departure: Four units propose a parking space in the frontyard.

Rationale: Due to topography, site layout, and desire to preserve common space, front yard parking is most feasible for four of the thirteen units. A well-designed fence/gate, landscaping, and elevated front porch help mitigate any adverse impacts.

Encouraging a Sense of Community

These code departures create more than just affordability, they contribute to a feeling of community as well. This project attempts to remedy the fragmentation of neighborhoods by market-driven development. Garages are sunk below grade and grouped together so as to not dominate the streetscape. Low boundary walls serve as casual benches. Large windows, porches, and small scale design features give the streets and shared spaces a human quality. The houses are grouped around a common space with a playground, pea patches, and community-maintained landscaping. All units have views of the playground area from the kitchen/eating space. All this is achieved with a density of 1/2840.



Washington Homes — North Rainier Multi-Unit Housing

Architect:

David Foster, North Rainier
Seattle, WA

Owner:

George Washington

Neighborhood Advocate:

Barbara Alten, North Rainier
Neighborhood Planning Team

Project Summary & Jury Comments

Proposal for 13 two- and three-bedroom units exceeds density limits of current zoning, offers a "compelling example of a solution that minimizes the disruption that vehicle parking often causes." In this way, the project will create both internal community among the families who will occupy it, and a valid connection with the existing community. "A good arrangement helps achieve a win-win deal on this one."

Should Be Built